A GARLAND OF POEMS

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B. CHAKRAVARTI
S. BHATTACHARYA

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A GARLAND OF POEMS

(For Intermediate Students)

[Prescribed by the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, U. P., Allahabad]

Edited and Annotated by

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He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume.
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurseling of immortality !

—*Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.
Punjaba-Sindhu-Gujarata-Maratha-
Dravida-Utkala-Banga.
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga-
Uchchala-jaladhi-taranga.
Tava subha name jage
Tava subha asisa mage
Gahe tava jaya-gatha.
Jana-gana-mangala-dayaka, jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,
Jaya jaya jaya, jaya he.

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PREFACE

Poetry, like the best delights of life, can never be satisfactorily defined. When Dr. Johnson was asked as to what poetry is, the worthy man replied, "Why, Sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all know what light is; but it is not easy to tell what it is."

Poetry is a harmonious fusion of some or all of the qualities of Beauty, Imagination, Mystery and so on. To Arnold it is the criticism of life; to Shelley it is the language of imagination; to Wordsworth it is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge. Whatever it is, Poetry is the highest form of creative art seeking an imaginative and musical expression of man's emotional response to life.

English poetry is an astonishing achievement, a fountain of joy to lovers of poetry all the world over. "By nothing is England so glorious as by her poetry," claimed Matthew Arnold. A short though satisfying view of that glory, it is hoped, will be found in the poems quoted in this selection.

Most of the poets represented here are acknowledged masters of English poetry. A few minor poets have found place in this galaxy of immortals, not by courtesy but by merit, as the excellence of their poems will show.

Editors.

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THE NOBLE NATURE

BEN JONSON (1572—1637)

The famous contemporary of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson occupies a place in English literature both as a great poet and as a dramatist. He was offered the poet-laureateship by James I, King of Great Britain. Jonson, as a man of letters, built for himself a position which no writer before him had attained. Among his intimate friends were Shakespeare, Donne and Bacon. Eminent for his sound classical scholarship and noted as a brilliant conversationalist, Ben Jonson had a very interesting and dominating personality. The hall-mark of his vivid personality is left in everything he wrote. As a poet he is chiefly remembered for his exquisite lyrics and as a song-writer he had few equals in his days. He ruled as a dictator over a new school of poets known as the 'Sons of Ben' and set a new fashion in epigrams. He died poor but was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The idea contained in the poem that follows is that the perfection of life is qualitative, not quantitative. The nobleness of human nature lies not in mere outward development but in truly good deeds. For comparison the following lines by Philip James Bailey may be studied :—

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best."

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It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May.
Although it fall and die that night ;
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see ;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

—*Ben Jonson.*

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ক্ষণস্থায়ী ধরোর

H.Y. TRANSIENCE (Chemistry) 2

SAROJINI NAIDU (1879—1949)

Of the few Indians who occupy a niche in the temple of English poetry, Sarojini Naidu is one. Daughter of Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, a noted Bengalee Brahmin educationist 'whose great learning was matched by his public spirit', she owed much to the inspiring guidance of her father. She was sent to England at sixteen with a scholarship from the Nizam's College, Hyderabad, and there she studied at King's College, London, and Girton College, Cambridge. Her lyrical genius won immediate recognition from eminent critics like Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse, and presently she established herself as a lyric poet of great musical excellence which earned for her the title 'The Nightingale of India'. She was a 'natural poet', as she once remarked about herself, "I sing just as the birds do." Delicate fancy and mastery of metrical form are the chief traits of her poetry. As Mary C. Sturgeon says, "Hers is a gracious and glowing personality, quick and warm with human feeling, exquisitely sensitive to beauty and receptive of ideas, wearing its culture, old and new, scientific and humane, with simplicity."

The poetess here exhorts us not to be downhearted in the face of adversity for there will always be beautiful things to hearten us and further inspires us with the thought that hope will dawn anew.

Compare her poem with the following line of Shelley :-

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?"

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Nay, do not grieve, tho', life be full of sadness,
Dawn will not veil her splendour for your grief
Nor spring deny their bright, appointed beauty,
To lotus blossom and ashoka leaf.

Nay, do not pine tho' life be dark with trouble,
Time will not pause or tarry on his way ;
To-day that seems so long, so strange, so bitter,
Will soon be some forgotten yesterday.

[Nay, do not weep, new hopes, new dreams, new faces
The unspent joy of all the unborn years,
Will prove your heart a traitor to its sorrow
And make your eyes unfaithful to their tears.]

unspent joy - અખર્ચાયેલો આનંદ. —*Sarojini Naidu.*

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BEAUTY

JOHN MASEFIELD (1878—)

Masefield succeeded Robert Bridges as Poet Laureate in 1930. His first success came with the poems which have for their material his experience of early life of struggle and adventure. His poetry is marked by a realism, directness, "boyish clarity of vision and capacity for delight." There is something undoubtedly positive about his poetry, which is always aglow with ardent enthusiasm. There is, as Richard Church puts it, "throughout his work one quality which does not date, and which belongs to no fashion. It is fervour. Hardly a poem amongst his huge collection is unmarked by it."

This poem is not one of the sea-poems of Masefield, by which he is generally represented. It has a warm note of reticent passion which finds a terse expression in his adoration of the charm of the beloved, which, the poet feels, excels all other forms of beauty.

I have seen dawn and sunset on moors and
windy hills
Coming in solemn beauty like slow old tunes of
Spain ;
I have seen the lady April bringing the daffodils,
Bringing the springing grass and the soft warm
April rain.

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I have heard the song of the blossoms and the
old chant of the sea,
And seen strange lands from under the arched
white sails of ships;
But the loveliest things of beauty God ever has
showed to me
Are her voice, and her hair, and eyes, and the
dear red curve of her lips.

—*John Masefield.*

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M.Y. SILVER 1923

WALTER DE LA MARE (1873—1956)

A craftsman and metrist of uncommon skill, Walter de la Mare is one of the best known and most widely appreciated of modern English poets. His poetry transports the reader into an eerie and beautiful world that is a realm of things, elfin, miniature, gracious and lovely. His imagination has the magic of changing the familiar world into a dreamland of fairy phantasy. As observed by Fowler, "Mr. Walter de la Mare has attempted, both in prose and verse, the essentially poetic task of capturing and expressing thoughts and imaginations which elude the logical reasoner but are not idle, though they may be shadowy."

This poem is a wonderful illustration of minute poetic observations of the loveliness of the moonlit world making an enchanted scene. As a critic puts it: "Here is a strange and radiant night, where things are suddenly glimpsed in a new aspect, having put on an unfamiliar shape and colouring in the moon's clear light."

The following lines from John Drinkwater's 'Moonlit Apples' may be studied in this connection :—

"A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scatches, and then.

There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice ; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

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They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,
And quiet is the steep stair under."

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch,
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

—*Walter de la Mare.*

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THE MOON

W. H. DAVIES (1871—1940)

William Henry Davies is a 'picturesque figure' in the twentieth century English literature. He was known for many years as 'the tramp-poet', for, he lived the life of a tramp in England and in U. S. A. His 'Autobiography of a Supertramp'—now a classic—tells the story of his eventful life. It was Bernard Shaw who first recognised him as a genius. Soon the artless simplicity and unlaboured flow of his poetry impressed other critics and Davies became famous. Thereafter "he poured out a flood of ecstatic lyrical verse, sitting like a robin near the ground."

Davies works within a limited range and has for his constant theme subjects seemingly trivial and worn out, of which he makes the most enchanting songs.

The magic that the moon works on the mind has been the subject of endless poems. Here the poetry of moonlight is approached in a different manner altogether. Davies in his characteristic way desires to admire her charms in silence and not in rapturous outbursts.

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
Oh thou fair Moon, so close and bright ;
Thy beauty makes me like the child,
That cries aloud to own thy light :
The little child that lifts each arm
To press thee to her bosom warm.

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Though there are birds that sing this night
With thy white beams across their throats,
Let my deep silence speak for me
More than for them their sweetest notes :
Who worships thee till music fails
Is greater than thy nightingales.

—*W. H. Davies.*

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NIGHT 6

RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861—1941)

Rabindranath Tagore, 'the greatest figure in the modern Indian Renaissance,' became during his lifetime almost a symbol of India. This immortal singer of the songs of the spirit has been described by a kindred soul as "an intellect vast and serene; comprehending the totality of all existence." Tagore is our representative national poet and his poetry gives a profound expression to all that is best and deepest in the tradition of this ancient country of ours. He is the first Indian poet of our times to win world-recognition which came in the wake of his winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. His soaring, majestic imagination, his universal range, his sublime poetic mysticism are qualities which place him among the greatest poets of the world. The present poem reflects at their best some of the distinctive features of his transcendent poetic genius.

This poem, a condensed translation 'into a rhythmical English prose' from the original Bengali, takes us deep into the mystery of Night, the inspirer of poets and sages.

Make me thy poet, O Night, veiled Night!

There are some, who have sat speechless for ages in thy shadow; let me utter their songs.

Take me up on thy chariot without wheels: running noiselessly from world to world, thou queen in the palace of time, thou darkly beautiful!

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Many a questioning mind has stealthily entered thy courtyard, and roamed through thy lampless house seeking for answers.

From many a heart, pierced with the arrow of joy, from the hands of the Unknown, have burst forth glad chants, shaking the darkness to its foundation.

Those wakeful souls gaze in the starlight in wonder at the treasure they have suddenly found.

Make me their poet, O Night, the poet of fathomless silence.

—*Rabindranath Tagore.*

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CLOUDS

RUPERT BROOKE (1887—1915)

Rupert Brooke, whose untimely death in the First World War has lent a romantic halo to his reputation, was a poet of exceptional promise. A fine, subtle artist, endowed with a delicate, sensuous perception, in which he resembles Keats, Brooke has a number of memorable poems to his credit. Though mainly known as a war-poet Brooke has also for his themes, beauty, love, death and decay. His poems show a close sympathy with Nature and sometimes, as here, a rich vein of melancholy. "He is a Shelley, terrestrial but more human. His vision of beauty is essentially and vitally mundane." Brooke's poetry signifies a rich abundance of life. If imagination be the primary poetic quality, the present poem is a fine specimen of his true poetic gift.

These lines breathing a mellow sadness describe the process of the formation of clouds which have been endowed with human feelings and are imagined as spectators from above of the procession of human beings on the earth below.

Down the blue night the unending columns press
In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow,
Now tread the far South, or lift rounds of snow
Up to the white moon's hidden loveliness.
Some pause in their grave wandering comradeless,
And turn with profound gesture vague and slow,

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As who would pray good for the world, but know
Their benediction empty as they bless.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain
Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.
I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,
In wise majestic melancholy train,
And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas,
And men, coming and going on the earth.

—*Rupert Brooke.*

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THE POETRY OF EARTH

JOHN KEATS (1795—1821)

"If poetry does not come like leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all", wrote Keats in a letter of his. Spontaneous yet ever-awake to the highest values of poetry, Keats achieved an artistic excellence which, considering his life cut short by a fatal illness, is indeed phenomenal. As a poet his place is secure beside the supreme masters of English poetry. The aesthetic creed of this essentially poetic soul was the realisation of the principle of Beauty in all things. A passion for sensuous beauty is the key-note of his poetry. As Hudson estimates, "He loved nature just for its own sake and for the 'glory and loveliness' which he everywhere found in it, and no modern poet has ever been nearer than he was to the simple poetry of earth."

This piece is a typical expression of Keats' poetic temperament. To the poet the earth garlanded by the round of seasons is never lacking in joyous variety, enriched even by the smallest of living things.

The poetry of earth is never dead :
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead

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In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights ; for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

—*John Keats.*

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PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792—1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelly has always given his readers the impression of a beautiful angel come to earth by mistake. Never has a poet trod this earth of ours in such ecstatic poetic fervour which was the very breath of his being. As a lyric poet he stands unsurpassed, raining down a stream of divine melody "in unpremeditated art". With other poets, remarks Prof Bradley, the vehicle of expression was verse which occasionally became poetry, but with Shelley the natural medium of expression was superb poetry. The doleful music that pervades the poem presented here, is the very echo of his short, sorrowful, stormy life.

This characteristic poem of Shelley sums up his conception that the fairest things of earth are but a shadow. The evanescent nature of the dear things of life leaves in the heart of the poet a tearful warning that "happiness is an illusion followed by disillusion".

Note the difference in the attitudes of the two contemporary great poets (Keats and Shelley) towards life. To one the joyous principle of life is an unceasing process, to the other life is but a fleeting show.

It may also be noted that Shelly's 'Mutability' offers a contrast to Naidu's poem 'Transience'. For Shelley happiness is transient whereas, for Naidu, sorrow is transient.

The flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies ;

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All that we wish to stay
Tempts and then flies ;
What is this world's delight ?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.
Virtue, how frail it is !
Friendship how rare !
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair !
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy, and all
Which ours we call.
Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day ;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

—*P. B. Shelley.*

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6

THERE ROLLS THE DEEP

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809—1892)

From 1842 to time of his death, if one man dominated the field of English poetry it was Alfred Tennyson. There is hardly another example in the history of English letters, of a poet who received such honour and recognition during his life-time. In 1850 he was appointed poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth and later on, in 1884, was made a Baron in appreciation of his distinctive service to literature.

He is a most meticulous artist who spares himself no pains to 'chisel' his lines into perfection. Tennyson has a keen ear for fine shades of music and in graceful mellifluence and lyrical elegance he is only a step below the greatest poets. Most of the dominant ideas that moulded the intellectual temper of his times are voiced in his verses. The poem quoted here shows Tennyson as the most thoroughly representative poet of his age, for the spirit of scientific observation and the deep core of spiritual faith, both characteristic of Victorian poetry, are here clearly reflected.

The theme of this poem is the impact of changeability on the material world, contrasted with the equilibrium of the inner world of spirit. This piece is quoted from *In Memorium*—a philosophic elegy in the memory of poet's dear friend, A. H. Hallam who died a premature death. The shock of his friend's death moves the poet to a deep contemplation of the changes that overtake the world but

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he finds spiritual solace in the thought that the memory of his friend is not subject to change.

The difference and similarity between this poem and the preceding one are obvious. Tennyson notices the process of vast changes sweeping through Nature, but unlike Shelley he has a fixity of faith. With Tennyson it is change amidst which he finds a spiritual refuge to cling to ; with Shelley it is transitoriness leading to despair.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree,
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands ;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

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THESE REMAIN

MARY E. COLERIDGE (1861—1907)

A great grand niece of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary E. Coleridge inherited something of her celebrated ancestor's great literary genius. Her claim to literary reputation is two-fold, as an essayist and as a poet. The author of some very delightful essays—"her little launches on the sea of literature"—, Mary Coleridge reveals a mood that is at once 'sanguine and merry'. Those who knew her intimately, however, thought that her poetry has a better claim to survival than her essays. There is in her poems a perfect fusion, on the one hand, of a penetrating ballad-like simplicity and the terseness of an ode, and on the other of a deep-felt tenderness and devotional mysticism. "All poet and three quarters saint" was what her friends used to call her ; and here in these solemn lines which are a cryptic summing up of our civilization, we find the poet and the prophet both.

The thought that runs through this poem is that civilization is sustained not by material prosperity but by the creative ideas of man. The whole history of civilization down the ages illustrates that the splendid display of glorious achievements is a vanity, whereas human dreams and aspirations for higher things endure.

Egypt's might is tumbled down,
Down a-down the deeps of thought ;

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'Greece is fallen and Troy town,
'Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,
Venice' pride is nought.
But the dreams their children dreamed
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,
Airy nothing, as they deemed—
These remain.

—*Mary E. Coleridge.*

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LIFE THAT LASTS

THOMAS HARDY (1840—1928)

Though Hardy is chiefly reputed as a novelist of extraordinary calibre, his poetic contribution is no less great. He stands like an old massive rock, calmly contemplative and serenely observant of the eternal stream of life. Hardy began his literary career as a poet and after a long period in which he established himself as one of the top-ranking novelists of the world, he devoted the evening of his life to poetry again. There is a touch of grey ancientness in all his writings and that vision of life which is characteristically his, permeates his poetry too. Often described as a pessimist, Hardy, nevertheless, informs his poetry with a perception of essential values which go beyond the cheap optimism of lesser minds. His poetry has a new appeal in its restrained music and distilled pathos, and in the meditative sweep of his colossal imagination.

These lines call up the vision that the current of life courses through the simple and elemental activities of human beings. Three aspects of quiet, rustic life are chosen to illustrate this concept. The primordial practice of tilling, the throb of life in the peaceful countryside and the simple love of man and woman will exist even when the history of big wars is forgotten.

Compare the following lines from James H. Cousins—"In these quiet lines you look from the country life of England, across and beyond Europe, to the dateless and tribeless chronicle of the eternal human simplicities."

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I

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass :
Yet this will go onward the same
Though dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by :
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

—*Thomas Hardy.*

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18

1963

INVICTUS

W. E. HENLEY (1849—1903)

Poet, critic and editor, William Ernest Henley had to fight all his life with physical infirmity. The misfortune of being a cripple from boyhood could not damp his spirits and he waved his indomitable will as a banner against a cruel fate. He did a great deal of miscellaneous journalistic work in his capacity as an editor but his fame chiefly rests on his poetry. Henley's physical sufferings provide the key to his poem. His poems, unconventional, but challenging and stimulating, show a poignant force. "Like the poetry of John Masefield, the poetry of Henley is notable for clear-cut actuality and subordination of beauty for its own sake, to the effect of power." Among his best known pieces, 'Invictus' is one. "These splendid lines written in 1875, when he had lain for months in Edinburgh Infirmary, were printed in his first work, 'Book of Verses'."

The poet though a life-long invalid throws a triumphant challenge to fate that had never been kind to him. These spirited lines celebrate a defiance which is but the victory of the human soul over circumstances.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

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In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate ;
I am the captain of my soul.

—*W. E. Henley.*

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ON HIS BLINDNESS

JOHN MILTON (1608—1674)

"Chief of organic numbers, old scholar of the spheres" is how Keats described Milton ; "God gifted organ-voice of England" is what Tennyson sang of him and "Thy soul was like a star that dwelt apart ; Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea" is what Wordsworth thought of him. These glowing tributes coming from three great poets of England, show the stature of Milton and the extent of the influence that he wielded on the succeeding generations of English poets. Milton elevated English poetry to an altitude which still stands as the summit of classical excellence. Nurtured by the forces of Renaissance and Puritanism, he exhibits a glow of sustained moral enthusiasm in his poetry. A consummate literary artist, the one acknowledged master of 'the grand style' and one combining intellectual power and creative power both at their highest, Milton is the most sublime of English poets.

This poem, perhaps the most famous of Milton's sonnets, has for its theme the poet's own blindness which was complete in 1652, when he was 44. Every word of this sonnet reflects the spirit of "noble resignation and patient humility."

The first eight lines of the poem have the following order of syntax : I fondly ask, Doth God exact day-labour, light—denied ? When I consider etc.

The unkindess of fate is the theme of this poem and of the previous one. Henley finds strength in an indomitable will but Milton finds consolation in humble resignation to the will of God.

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When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent,
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
Doth God exact day labour, light denied?
I fondly ask :—But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies ; God doth not need
Either man's work, or His own gifts : who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best : His state
Is kingly ; thousands at His bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest :—
They also serve who only stand and wait.

—*John Milton.*

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REMEMBRANCE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564—1616)

Shakespeare's position as the supreme dramatic poet the world is undisputed. That Art at its highest in Nature itself is conclusively demonstrated by Shakespeare who has become the unfailing fountain-head of inspiration and delight to posterity. There was a harmonious combination of many unique qualities in this myriad-minded man. Other writers may be labelled, but Shakespeare cannot be—a fact which prompted Arnold's famous lines :

"Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask ;—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge."

Besides 37 plays Shakespeare wrote two long poems *Venus and Adonis*, and *Lucrece*, and 144 sonnets. These sonnets represent the master in a new light. Here instead of Shakespeare the universal, creative artist, we find the conventional Elizabethan poet experimenting with the newly imported sonnet form.

To the poet the recollection of his dead friend is both depressing and comforting. In a pensive mood the poet, at first is troubled with a sense of loss which later on yields to a consolation born of remembrance.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,

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I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I now pay as if not paid before :

—But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

—*William Shakespeare.*

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DEATH

JOHN DONNE (1572—1631)

Poet and priest, John Donne, though born more than three hundred years ago, sounds strikingly modern to our ears. He was the leader of a new school of poetry termed as metaphysical poetry and in this connection it may be said that some of the modern poets owe their inspiration to him. His pulpit sermons ranked among the best of the seventeenth century. Donne, the poet has been re-discovered in our times, for there was something peculiar in his mental cast which prevented his getting full recognition in his own days. His poetry combines intellectual agility, depth of thought, scholarship, intensity of feeling and subtle reasoning with a roughness of form. His thought and diction reflect a robust manliness. Ben Jonson, his friend and contemporary, remarked that he was the first poet in something. Donne's stand as a poet is akin to that of a mystical scientist in his "magical illumination of shadowy and obscure thoughts with the lightnings of fancy." This memorable piece which treats death from an unusual point of view is the tenth poem of the 'Holy Sonnets' written after the death of his wife.

The poet offers here a logical analysis—though not the less poetic for it—of the powerlessness of death commonly regarded as Death the Omnipotent.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so ;

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For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From Rest and Sleep, which but thy picture be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and
desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

—*John Donne.*

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CHILD TO PARENTS

VIOLA MEYNELL

Daughter of Alice and Wilfred Meynell, the well-known literary figures, Viola Meynell is both a novelist and a poet. Brought up in ideally happy surroundings created by loving parents, she seems to have developed a fine sensitiveness for the sweet ties of affection between parents and children. The emotion of the present poem appears to have come out of the deep-felt experience of her own life. As a critic observes, "Miss Meynell's poem is only a trifle, but it is a beautiful trifle."

This poem, a very striking approach to the subject, is a passionate utterance of the child's profoundly mysterious relationship with the parents who re-live in their offspring.

I am your Colony where you have dispatched
What your own selves could spare.

I am your portrait where you look upon
Your eyes, your hands, your hair.

I am a book wherein you wrote a life;
Also your book to read.

I am a road you took knowing not where
Its way would lead.

I am a mystery on which you dwell,
Though made of your own parts you know so well.

—*Viola Meynell.*

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LARKS

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844—1930)

Robert Bridges, the Poet-Laureate of England from 1913 to 1930, "has an unassailable place among national poets as a link between the older and the younger schools of English lyrical poets." A craft-artist, he wrote verses whose beauty has been likened to that of chiselled marble. He borrowed and assimilated the sprit and manner of the great singers of the past. His poetic creed is announced in the following lines:—

"I love all beauteous things
I seek and adore them."

The lark, the bird of joyful music, soaring through layers of mist to the region of sunlight is the symbol of that divine melody that soothes and shelters the hearts of grief-stricken human beings. A comparison with Shelley's famous poem "To A Skylark" seems to be inevitable here and the two poems may be studied together profitably.

What voice of gladness, hark !
In heaven is ringing ?
From the sad fields the lark
Is upward winging.
High through the mournful mist that blots our day
Their songs betray them soaring in the grey.
See them ! Nay, they

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In sunlight swim ; above the furthest stain
Of cloud attain ; their hearts in music rain
Upon the plain.

Sweet birds, far out of sight
Your songs of pleasure
Dome us with joy as bright
As heaven's best azure.

—*Robert Bridges.*

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TO THE DAISY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770—1850)

Shakespeare's subject is human nature and Nature is Wordsworth's subject. William Wordsworth is, after Shakespeare, the most potent influence in English poetry. In fact, the confluence of these two currents has made English literature what it is today. Wordsworth held that the contemplation of natural life "in a wise passiveness" could revitalise our slumbering souls. Nature to him is informed with that mystical force by which

"We are laid asleep
In body and become a living soul ;
While with an eye made quiet by power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy
We see into the life of things."

His nature-poetry has been described by Walter Pater as fresh mountain-air, as pure as it is healing.

The daisy is symbolic of that "religion of Nature" which accepts life with a uniform cheerfulness, neither embarrassed by sorrow nor elated by joy. To Wordsworth even the meanest flower that blooms can give the most elevating thoughts. This common flower too contains a profound message of heroic and calm joyfulness.

The present poem and the foregoing one have much in common. Both have for their subject the solace that abides in the life of Nature, The lark penetrates the grey mist to reach a blissful world of sunshine and music ; the delicately beautiful daisy weathers all the vagaries of Nature in fortitude.

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Bright flower ! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy and sorrow ;

Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest through !

Is it that Man is soon deprest ?
A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason ;
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season ?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing ;
Meek yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical,
In peace fulfilling.

—*William Wordsworth.*

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WHAT THEN ?

WILLAM BUTLER YEATS (1865—1939)

One of the most outstanding poets of his times, Yeats is an Irishman by birth. In the complex pattern of the predominantly intellectual atmosphere of modern English letters, Yeats brings a fresh shower of pure, vibrant poetry, the source of which can be traced to the spirit of Irish folk-lore. Gifted with an essentially romantic mysticism and delicate witchery of expression, Yeats leaves in our mind the effect of a haunting melody and an ethereal glow.

Yeats was awarded the Nobel prize in 1923 ; he has also the credit of introducing Tagore to the West.

This is a poem on man's eternal longing for the ideal and the absolute. Earthly attainments and perfection are not identical. The poet here depicts the various stages in the life of a so-called prosperous man, who despite his outer success, is yet far from the highest reaches of man's quest for t he ideal.

His chosen comrades thought at school
He must grow a famous man ;
He thought the same and lived by rule,
All his twenties crammed with toil ;
'What then ?' sang Plato's ghost, 'What then ?'
Everything he wrote was read,
After certain years he won
Sufficient money for his need,

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Friends that have been friends indeed ;
'What then?' sang Plato's ghost, 'What then?'

All his happier dreams came true—
A small old house, wife, daughter, son,
Grounds where plum and cabbage grew,
Poets and Wits about him drew ;
'What then?' sang Plato's ghost, 'What then?'

'The work is done,' grown old he thought,
'According to my boyish plan ;
Let the fools rage, I swerved in naught,
Something to perfection brought;'
But louder sang that ghost, 'What then?'

—*W. B. Yeats.*

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NOTES AND EXERCISES

THE NOBLE NATURE

growing .....in bulk—mere physical growth.

doth make.....be—contributes to the excellence of a man's character. ('doth' is the old form of 'does')

standing.....on oak—living for a long time like the huge oak tree.

sere—leafless.

of a day—blooming only for a day.

of Light—of pure beauty and joy.

small proportions—in the small things of life.

just beauties—complete expression of beauty.

in short measures—even within a limited range.

Exercise

(i) Why does Ben Jonson say that growing like a tree does not make man better ?

(ii) How can just beauties be seen in small proportions ?

(iii) Why does Ben Jonson think that beauty and bulk do not go together ?

TRANSIENCE

Transience—The quality of passing away.

Nay do not etc.—"From the transitory nature of our joys and sorrows, the poet draws a lesson of consolation. Life may be full of sadness but it is futile to give way to it."—Turnbull.

grieve—be sorry and despairing.

Dawn.....splendour—Morning will not conceal her grand feast of beauty.

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appointed—usual, "allotted to them in the natural order of things."

tarry—wait.

unspent joy—joy stored in future; the prospect of future joy.

Will.....to its sorrow—prove sorrow to be unfounded.

eyes.....tears—eyes giving the lie to the tears shed before as there would be no trace of sorrow in later years of joy ; our present sorrow will be forgotten when happiness comes. (Note in this connection the remark of Mary C. Sturgeon :

"Resignation and renunciation are alike impossible to this ardent being who loves the earth so passionately.")

EXERCISE

(i) What is the central idea of the poem ?

(ii) Why does Naidu ask us not to grieve, though life be full of sadness ?

BEAUTY

solemn beauty—beauty touched with a gravity too deep for expression.

slow old tunes of Spain—the lingering notes of the ancient music of Spain.

lady April—April imagined as the Queen of Spring.

song of the blossoms—the hum of bees on the flowers in bloom.

old chant of the sea—the long-familiar music of the rolling sea-waves.

arched—curved, bow-shaped.

EXERCISE

(i) What are the many forms of beauty that the poet has experienced ?

(ii) Why is the beauty of his beloved supreme to him ?

(iii) What is the theme of the poem ?

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SILVER

the moon.....shoon—the moon imagined as a fairy stepping across the night sky, with silver shoes on.

peers—peeps out.

silver fruits etc.—Note how moonlight makes everything it falls on appear silvery.

casements—windows.

thatch—roof made of dry grass or leaves.

couched—lying curled up.

kennel—small hut for dogs.

cote—shelter for doves.

silver-feathered sleep—the sleeping doves with the silvery moonbeams on their feathers.

(Compare "With thy white beams across their throats." *The Moon*—Davies)

scampering—running in a hurried and frightened manner.

Exercise

(i) Give a note of appreciation on the minute details of the moonlit night.

(ii) How does the poet create the eerie atmosphere ?

THE MOON

haunts.....soul—charms the poet as by a spell.

own thy light.....catch the beams of the moon.

white.....throats—moonlight falling on the throats of birds.

deep.....for me—express the magic effect of the moon better by silence.

who—the poet.

nightingales—well-known singing birds.

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Exercise

(i) In what way is this poem different from the other poems on the moon ?

(ii) Why does the poet want his deep silence to speak for him ?

NIGHT

veiled Night—mysterious night.

in the shadow—in the darkness of the night, the deep dark hours of the night inspiring the profound regions of thought.

with their songs—give expression to their unexpressed feelings.

Take me on thy chariot without wheels—The poet craves to be the companion of Night in her eternal flight. Night is viewed as a queen passing on her cosmic chariot.

world to world—worlds of space and time.

queen in the palace of time—most beautiful and majestic spirit dwelling in the heart of time.

darkly—mysteriously.

questioning mind—men trying to solve the profound problems of life ; seekers.

courtyard—courtyard of the palace of time where Night is the queen.

pierced with the arrow of joy—stirred by divine rapture.

glad chants—songs fired with the ecstasy of joy ; rhapsody.

wakeful souls—those sleeplessly searching into the mystery of creation.

Exercise

(i) What are those problems that many a questioning mind has tried to solve ?

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(ii) Why should night be the time when the human mind is disturbed with a creative enquiry ?

(iii) What, according to the poet, are the majestic beauties of Night ?

CLOUDS

Down the blue night—along the blue sky of the night, (some modern poets have perceived a blue tinge in the night-sky.)

Unending columns—endless masses of clouds.

press is noiseless tumult—are heaped together in silent commotion (an example of oxymoron).

break and wave and flow—scatter, heave and glide (three verbs for three varieties of movement of clouds.)

rounds of snow—round formation of soft clouds like white fleecy snow.

moon's hidden loveliness—the charming beauty of the moon screened by layers of clouds.

some—some clouds.

pause in their grave wandering comradeless–stop in the course of their thoughtful and lonely sojourn across the sky.

Turn with profound gesture—make deep and significant movements.

benediction—good wishes.

empty—unfruitful.

rich heirs—successors rich in life.

the dead.....remain etc.—the hovering clouds are compared to the departed souls that are believed to watch disinterestedly those they have left behind.

still-raging—always restless.

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Exercise

(i) Describe in your own words the shifting cloud pictures that the poet has painted.

(ii) Point out the undercurrent of sadness running through the poem.

THE POETRY OF EARTH

The poetry of earth—the spontaneous overflow of the spirit of joy in Nature.

is never dead—is never discontinued ; goes on for ever.

faint—languid, drowsy.

new-mown mead—lawn where the grass has been cut down of late.

Grasshopper—a jumping insect that lives in grass and produces a chirping sound.

takes the lead—leads the music.

summer luxury–the natural richness of the earth in summer.

has never done with his delights—never gets tired of singing out his joy.

lone—desolate, lonely.

when frost has wrought silence—when perfect silence reigns on the snow-covered earth.

strove—warm place, like a hot-house for plants.

shrills—makes a sharp thin sound.

cricket—a leaping, chirping insect.

in warmth...ever—rising to higher and higher pitches of joy.

one.....lost—a person half-asleep with listening to the rich music of the cricket.

the Grasshopper's—the song of the grasshopper.

Exercise

(i) Rabindranath says that we starve ourselves by

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paying no heed to the small joys of life. Can you call Keats' poem an illustration of this observation ?

(ii) What forms the theme of this poem ?

(iii) What does Keats mean by "the poetry of earth" ?

MUTABILITY

Mutability—the unstable nature of things.

smiles—blossoms.

to stay—to retain permanently.

tempts and then flies—excites desire and afterwards disappears.

world's delight—the nature of worldly pleasure.

lightning.....night—the momentary flash of lightning that laughs at the darkness of the night.

frail—inconstant, weak.

sells.....despair—offers a brief spell of happiness only to reduce it to intense but noble sorrow.

proud—"proud" because love leaves a memory to cherish proudly.

they—"they" stands for virtue, friendship and love.

survive their joy—continue to live even after the pleasant days offered by them are gone.

eyes.....night—the beautiful eyes of the beloved that lose their charm very soon.

make glad the day—sweeten life for a very short time.

dream thou—enjoy the dream of pleasure.

then wake to weep—soon after face the stark and sad reality of life ; face the sad transience of things we value most.

Exercise

(i) State in your own words the transient nature of beautiful things.

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(ii) Bring out the hidden meaning of the expression "proud despair".

(iii) Why, according to the poet, should one wake to weep ?

THERE ROLLS THE DEEP

the deep—the sea.

what.....seen—The earth has passed through a process of vast and violent changes.

There rolls.....sea—Note the close resemblance of this stanza with the following lines by an earlier poet, James Beattie :—

"Art, empire, earth itself to change are doomed ;
Earthquakes have raised to heaven the humble vale,
And gulfs the mountain's mighty mass entombed,
And where oh ! Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloomed."

stillness of.....sea—the silence of the mid-ocean.

the hills...shadows—even strong and solid hills are as unsubstantial as shadows.

flow.....from—go through many phases of change.

stands—remains as it is.

melt etc.—viewed in the larger perspective of time all that appear firm and solid, vanish like vapour.

like clouds.....go—solid substantial things like unsubstantial clouds assume a variety of shapes, and evaporate.

in my...dwell—find an abiding shelter in the soul.

lips.....adieu—say good-bye ; bid farewell.

think.....farewell—in the outer world where things are mutable we take leave of them, but in the inner world of spirit things remain.

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Exercise

(i) Is there any scientific ground for the poetic description of the sweeping changes in nature ?

(ii) How can the hills be described as shadows ?

(iii) Where does the poet finally find a safe shelter ? What leads him there ?

(iv) Do you think that Carlyle's definition of poetry as 'musical thought' may be applicable to the present poem ?

THESE REMAIN

Egypt's might—the mighty Egyptian civilization of ancient times.

tumbled down—come to ruins.

down.....thoughts—the glory of that dead civilization has now sunk into a mere memory.

Greece etc.—Greece, Troy, Rome, Venice, each had, like Egypt, its own glorious civilization, now extinct.

dreams their...dreamed—the noble structure of thought they had built.

fleeting.....vain—which appeared transitory, unreal and insignificant.

airy nothing—having no solid foundation ; (the phrase is taken from Shakespeare's famous passage in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.)

they deemed—they had considered these dreams to be of no lasting value.

these remain—the apparently insignificant structure of thought lasts though the solid material framework crumbles down.

Exercise

(i) The poetess thinks that material prosperity is neither the measure nor the support of civilization. Why ?

(ii) Write a short note on the difference between Hardy's conception of history and Mary Coleridge's conception of civilization.

(iii) How do the dreams of our forefathers endure ?

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LIFE THAT LASTS

Life That Lasts—The original title chosen by the poet for this poem is "In Time of the Breaking of Nations", an excerpt from Hardy's epic-drama 'The Dynasts'.

only—The poet wants us to focus our eye on three definite phases of quiet countryside life he paints in the poem.

harrowing clods—breaking lumps of earth on ploughed land and making it even.

slow silent walk—Note the musical repetition of 's' and 'l' suggestive of the calm and leisurely life in the countryside.

stumbles and nods—trips over the rough ground, moving in a state of drowsiness.

stalk—slowly move forward.

only thin smoke etc.—Note that here is a suggestion of the enduring nature of the restful walks of life.

couch-grass—a species of grass with long creeping roots.

dynasties—lines of kings, kingdoms.

a maid and her wight—a girl and her man (lover).

war's.....story die—records of the glories of war will be forgotten but simple love will not be.

ere—before.

Exercise

(i) Describe the three aspects of life that the poet has outlined here. Why does he think them to be eternal ?

(ii) Explain the last two lines of the poem.

(iii) Give the substance of the poem.

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INVICTUS

Invictus—a Latin adjective meaning 'unconquered'.
night—misfortune, adverse circumstances.
the pit—hell.
gods—the powers that govern human destiny.
fell—ruthless (an adjective).
clutch—grip.
winced—flinched with pain.
bludgeonings—heavy blows.
wrath—anger.
looms—appears threateningly.
the shade—the shadowy regions, hell.
menace—threat.
strait—difficult to pass through, narrow.
(Compare "Strait is the gate and narrow is the path" —The Bible),
the scroll—roll of parchment or paper containing the list of charges against the poet.

Exercise

(i) What is the source of Henley's unyielding courage ?
(ii) There is no defeat for those who know no fear. Can this be said of Henley ?
(iii) Explain the last two lines.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

light—eyesight.
is spent—is gone.
one talent—poetic talent ; there is also a reference to the Biblical story (Matthew XXV, 14-30) in which a talent

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(a gold coin) is deposited by a master with a foolish servant who buries it underground and makes no use of it.

death to hide—The talent is to end with death ; to be buried like the talent of the story. (Though Milton laments his blindness in this poem, all his great works were written during his blindness.)

lodged with—lying with, deposited with.

more bent—all the more willing.

my Master—God.

present.....account—show the full use of the trust.

lest.....chide—for fear of the rebuke of God when the poet returns to Him.

exact.....denied—expect service from a blind man.

fondly—foolishly.

prevent.....murmur—silence the complaint.

mild yoke—merciful authority.

thousand—angels and men in thousands : the majestic orderliness of the Divine Dispensation finds a stately utterance here.

bidding—command.

speed and post—hurry forth (to execute His orders).

they.....wait—The blind poet finds consolation in the thought that not only by active service but also by silent enduring man may serve his Creator.

(Note how the sonnet ends, as all great sonnets end, with a sense of absolute completeness and an ennobling moral realisation.)

Exercise

(i) What is the problem that torments the poet ?

(ii) What consolation does Milton find ?

(iii) Explain fully the last line of the poem.

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(iv) Do you see the contrast between Milton's resignation and Henley's resoluteness ?

REMEMBRANCE

sessions—The word 'sessions' may be interpreted as (1) sittings to brood over thoughts : (2) "memory summoned to give evidence as a witness before a court." (Note the alliteration of 's' sound in "sessions of sweet silent thought.")

sweet silent thought—pleasant pensive mood.

remembrance—memory, recollection.

sigh the lack—sorrow for the want.

old woes new wail—lament again over past sorrows.

dear time's waste—losses suffered in youth,

drown an eye—fill the eyes with tears.

unused to flow—that did not shed tears before.

dateless night—perpetual darkness.

long-since-cancell'd woe—long-forgotten grief.

expense—loss.

vanished sight—the sight of friends who are no more.

grievances—sorrows.

foregone—past.

heavily—sadly, with a heavy heart.

tell o'er—recount.

fore-bemoaned-moan—the sorrowful events once lamented in the past.

new pay—pay afresh.

if the while—at such a time, when.

restored—compensated for.

All losses etc.—the memory of his dear friend makes the poet happy even in his grief.

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EXERCISE

(i) Describe how the poet laments over past sorrows?

(ii) Why does he weep afresh ?

(iii) How can all losses be restored ?

(iv) Do you feel that the end of this poem is abrupt, artificial and weak ? If so try to find some reasons for your judgment.

DEATH

think'st thou dost overthrow—it thinks it overpowers.

poor Death—"poor" because the poet considers death not at all as mighty as others claim it to be.

nor.. ...me—death cannot end life as soul is immortal.

which.....picture be—which are only a likeness of death.

much pleasure—"flow" understood.

then..... flow—if rest and sleep which are but the image of death can comfort care-worn people, death should certainly provide greater relief.

And.....delivery—that is why the noblest of men welcome death, for it offers them repose in the grave and release of the soul.

Thou'rt slave—death is not all-powerful as death may be caused by fate etc.

dwell—is associated with.

poppy—opium : a drug producing sleep.

charm—spell.

swell'st.....then—so death has no ground to be proud.

short sleep—the sleep of death.

wake eternally—the sleep of death being over, men arise into the life eternal.

Death shall be no more—Death shall cease to exist.

Death.....die—Death, taken to be the cause of everyone's death, will itself die.

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Exercise

(i) What is unusual about the theme of this poem ?

(ii) Why does the poet think that Death has no reason to be proud ? Do you think that his arguments are sound and convincing ?

CHILD TO PARENTS

I—the child.

Colony—a country where a settlement has been founded ; the child is the colony as the parents find a new habitation for themselves in the lives of their children.

dispatched—sent.

What...spare—whatever the parents could manage to give.

portrait—likeness.

Your eyes etc.—A child generally takes after its parents ; so many points of close similarity in looks may often be delightfully discovered.

book.....life—the child's life is the creative expression of the parents.

Also.....read—a book of life to be joyfully studied.

road etc.—here the child is compared to an adventure of creation which the parents undertook.

mystery—a deep and strange secret.

dwell—try to explore.

made of.....well—mystery made of familiar things of the parents' life.

Exercise

(i) Why is the child a mystery ?

(ii) Explain fully the significance of the child's description of itself as a colony founded by the parents.

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LARKS

hark—listen.

sad fields—fields covered with fog and so, gloomy; the world of pain.

upward winging—soaring; the flight of the lark from the sad earth towards the joyous heaven.

mournful mist—depressing fog; the suffering and despair of life.

blots our day—shuts out the light; darkens the joy of life.

songs.....grey—their songs reveal their presence in the fog that hides them. The flight of the lark in the mist is not in tune with their glad songs.

swim—float with easeful grace.

furthest.....attain—reach beyond the last speck of clouds.

hearts.....plain—pour down songs like a shower of music on the earth below.

Dome.....azure—enwraps us with the ecstasy of music as The blue sky vaults over the earth, thus sheltering it.

azure—sky blue.

Compare "He domes the red plow'd hills with loving blue"
—Tennyson.

Exercise

(i) Attempt a description of the poet's joy.

(ii) It is said of this poem that 'the whole piece is shaking with lyrical rapture.' Do you agree ?

(iii) How does the music of the larks "dome us with joy ?"

TO THE DAISY

daisy—a very common small flower, yellow in the centre and white round it.

home is everywhere—found everywhere : common.

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bold in maternal.....care—exuberant in Mother Nature's affectionate protection.

all.....through—throughout the year.

heir of joy and sorrow—born to face the pleasant and unpleasant seasons of Nature.

methinks—I think.

abides—exists.

concord..humanity-harmony between the daisy and mankind.

a thoughtless...reason—man when once unhappy does not derive consolation from the happy recollection of the past or from rational judgment.

wouldst teach him—hold out an example to man.

under every wind—in all situations.

wander'st.....willing—this common flower whether alone or befriended is happy with its lot and is never puffed up with joy or tortured with uncertainty.

meek—humble.

yielding.....call—accepting the situations as they come.

all things.....all—patiently enduring every kind of treatment from others.

apostolical—like an apostle or a saintly preacher (Compare "Let Nature be your teacher.")

in peace fulfilling-the daisy performs its duty by living a life instinct with peace and thus sets an example to mankind.

EXERCISE

(i) Of all flowers why did Wordsworth choose the daisy ?

(ii) What moral lesson does the poet learn from the daisy ? How can Nature be our Teacher ?

(iii) Appreciate this poem in the light of Wordsworth's definition "Poetry is the image of man and nature".

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WHAT THEN ?

His—the type of successful man.

Chosen comrades—intimate friends.

lived by rule–followed the conventional course of good living.

twenties—the period of life from the 20th to the 29th year.

crammed with toil—spent with breathless industry.

Plato—The most famous idealistic philosopher of ancient Greece. According to Plato reality consists in ideas or "archetypes" of which the material things are imperfect imitations or "prototypes".

Plato's ghost—the spirit of Plato holding before mankind the ideal (standard criterion) of Absolute Perfection.

'What then ?'—judged according to this criterion all human achievements fall short of the ideal perfection.

All his.....true—All that he wished to possess, he got.

wits—scholars.

about him drew—surrounded him.

The work is done—He thought his life's mission fulfilled.

Let fools rage—Let the stupid opponents criticise.

swerved in naught—deviated from the set plan in nothing.

Something.....brought—He was confident that he had lived a perfect life.

louder.....ghost—even then Plato's ghost disturbed his complacence by playfully reminding him that still he came short of the expected ideal.

Exercise

(i) For what does Plato's ghost stand ?

(ii) Trace the different stages in the life of a successful man.

(iii) How does the successful man fall short of the ideal of perfection ?

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